

# the Home Front

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

issued by THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

Vol. 6, No. 1

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NATIONWIDE ATTACK ON MODERN EDUCATION

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\*\*\* Who's In Back Of It? \*\*\*

Modern methods of education - sometimes called "progressive" education - have in recent months been made the target of a concerted nation-wide assault. Mushrooming with surprising speed, and hitting simultaneously in such widely separated places as Pasadena, Cal., Minneapolis, Minn., Chicago, Ill., northern New Jersey, and Denver, Colo., the sudden attack has already gained some notable successes. Flushed with victory, the proponents are fanning out to new areas and exultantly announcing their determination to get rid of "un-American," "socialistic" and "communistic" "frills and fads" in the public schools, and force a return to the good old "3 R's."

What's in back of this sudden campaign on a nationwide scale? What people are spearplugging it? What are the ideas in modern education they are attacking? What particular angles do they claim to be "socialistic" and "communistic?" Why are these people getting into the picture?

The true story is startling. It discloses a new and more fruitful field of activity for bigots and rabble-rousers who have recently found the pickings slim in their old stamping grounds. Liberal Americans and believers in democracy should know the facts and alert themselves to the danger before it is too late.

## What is modern ("progressive") education?

It is of course impossible in short compass to describe all that modern educators are aiming at. We can only describe tendencies, and particularly those facets which are now made a target for attack.

Under the guiding philosophy of such men as John Dewey, William H. Kilpatrick, Willard Goslin and George S. Counts, notable American educators, and with the full approval of the National Education Association, the overall body concerned with education in this country, many of the American public school systems have been exploring new techniques to humanize education, to

instill concepts of true democracy in our children, to give them an understanding of their fellow Americans and of the variety of their social, cultural and religious beliefs - to make them, in other words, better and more effective citizens.

#### What special "angles" are being attacked?

Intercultural education in particular. Intercultural education is the process by which school children learn to know the customs, traditions, backgrounds and religious beliefs of their school comrades, and by knowing them and understanding them, come to appreciate the rich variety of America and to discard prejudices against mere "differences."

Sex education next. Knowledge gained of bodily processes and sex under careful auspices and safeguards is termed "immoral" as well as "communitistic."

"Frills and fads." These consist, in the eyes of the attackers, of such things as in-training workshops for teachers, committees on human relations and child guidance, nursery schools, and practical education in democracy. Particularly objectionable are any methods by which segregation patterns in public schools might be avoided.

Secularism and "godlessness" in the schools. By this they mean the lack of a "Christian" training.

#### The Sparkplug

On July 15, 1948 an organization with a high-sounding name filed its certificate of incorporation in the State of New Jersey. The name was The National Council for American Education and the purpose, as set forth in the certificate, is to "eradicate from our schools Marxism, Socialism, Communism and all other forces that seek to destroy the liberty of the American people."

Heading the list of incorporators and its executive vice-president is Allen Alderson Zoll. Who is Allen Zoll? His record speaks for itself. In 1938 he organized the "American Patriots." In 1947, Attorney-General Clark placed the "American Patriots" on his list of fascist and subversive organizations. Also in 1938 Zoll achieved notoriety if not fame by leading a "Christian Front" picket line before radio station WMCA to protest its withdrawal of Father Coughlin's radio addresses from the air. That same year, and the next, Zoll chaired a series of meetings at which a veritable Who's Who of anti-Semites gave vent to their emotions. Among them were Joe McWilliams of the notorious "Christian Mobilizers," Elizabeth Dilling, hate pamphleteer, and General George Van Horn Moseley (retired), who now manages George W. Armstrong's hate enterprises. And, not so long ago, Zoll solicited for Merwin K. Hart's rightist organization.

There are more Vice-Presidents of the National Council for American Education. One is John O. Beaty, professor at Southern Methodist University, who discloses his sentiments sufficiently by a Christmas card he sent out. "Buy as a Christian," he exhorted, "vote as a Christian, pray as a Christian, and you will do your part toward reversing America's current trend toward immorality and paganism."

Still another Vice-President is Mrs. David Good who, before the war, was proud to introduce General Moseley on a public platform in Philadelphia. Moseley was exposed by the Dies Committee as having attended a private meeting of reactionary and pro-Nazi elements, including the Bundesfuehrer Fritz Kuhn.

And, on the Board of Governors, is listed the name of the Rev. Edward Lodge Curran, one of Father Coughlin's former ardent admirers and partisans.

Such, then, are some of the guiding spirits of the National Council for American Education.

There are also a multitude of other organizations with similar high-sounding names, featuring as key words in their names "American," "Education," "Citizens," "Businessmen" and "Employers." There seems to be a good many interlocking directorates in these, and a common fund of source material and distribution of "literature."

### The Assault - Pasadena

Pasadena has a remarkably fine public school system. In 1948 Dr. Willard Goslin, nationally famous educator, Minneapolis Superintendent of Schools and President of the American Association of School Administrators, was brought in to do a job of modernization. He installed a model system of education, complete with teacher training and work in intercultural, intergroup and human relations.

Naturally, such vital projects cost money; and so did his program for new school buildings zoned so as to avoid segregating certain groups of children within a particular school. And money required new taxes,

Now increased taxes are always unpopular, and businessmen, real estate owners and other taxpayers can be counted on to be "agin" them. Furthermore, some Americans are "traditionalists" in education and honestly believe that progressive education - in the sense of "frills and fads" - is heading down the wrong path and that we should return to the old pattern of the "three R's."

Here's where certain people with their own axes to grind had a chance to step into the picture. For the taxpayers and the traditionalists, honest and sincere in their convictions, furnished just the respectable front they needed. So did the subject matter. It lent itself, under cover of an old-fashioned American debate on the nature and purposes of education, to sneak attacks on liberalism, democracy, intergroup activities, and the wall of separation between Church and State. It gave them a chance to capitalize on current hysteria and the legitimate concern of Americans with the issue of Communism to smear strong liberals as "subversive" and "communistic." It found them allies among those groups who have already condemned the American public school system as "godless" and "materialistic."

The National Council for American Education - or shall we say Allen Zoll, who dominates it - rushed into the breach. In its publication, the Educational Guardian, under date of January, 1951, it declared that the most important of its activities is "the organization of, assistance to, and cooperation with, local school improvement groups seeking to eradicate un-American teaching and teachers." In the same issue it bragged that hundreds of such local groups and individuals had been "aided, stimulated to action or formed."

In Pasadena, a group calling itself the School Development Council took up the cudgels against Dr. Goslin and the whole idea of "progressive" education. They raised the popular cries of taxation, waste, and "frills and fads." They also circulated the literature of Zoll's National Council, which makes no bones about what it is pleased to call "the Socialist, collectivist propaganda in the schools" and warning that "America may go down the drain into the sewer of Socialism, before the educational system can be cleaned out." Of course, what these groups call "Socialism" and worse names, is what prominent educators call education for democracy and for citizenship.

Under such inflammatory conditions, Dr. Goslin was forced to resign. But his troubles were not over. For the California State Senate Committee investigating Communism was also brought into the picture. Four representatives of the School Development Council testified at its hearings, one of them asserting that UNESCO and the National Conference of Christians and Jews - no less - were "Communist" groups. And that the "Communist" stamp was on the film, the "Brotherhood of Man," released by CIO and preaching the basic equality of all peoples. Emphasis was also placed on "godlessness" of modern "progressive" education.

Among the allies of the School Development Council in beating down Dr. Goslin was the local chapter of a rightist organization known as Pro-America. A New Jersey component of this organization made its platform recently available to Merwin K. Hart and such activists as Joseph P. Kamp.

Zoll is modest enough not to claim full credit for the "splendid Success" in Pasadena. But he does coyly admit that his Council "and a number of our members did have a large part in it."

#### 'The Problem

Bad as it is, the situation in Pasadena might have been considered a local problem and not the concern of the country at large, were it not for certain significant features. Pasadena is not alone. It is just one phase of a carefully planned assault on "progressive" education - as Zoll and his allies define it - all over the country. The school systems of New Jersey, Denver, San Diego are already under similar attack, and others are earmarked for destruction. Zoll travels the country' soliciting financial and ideological support for NCAE's program and surveying areas where local programs might be started. In New Jersey quantities of his NCAE literature bear the stamp of Conde McGinley's hate-sheet, Common Sense, as the distribution agent for further pamphlets.

If this assault wins out, not only "progressive" education will be the victim, but other things which rabble-rousers are perhaps much more interested in. As yet they have not invoked overt anti-Semitism as part of their strategy. Their allies are too valuable to them.

But that only makes them the more dangerous. As long as they were simply avowed hatemongers, and could be branded as such, their appeal was to the lunatic fringe alone, and not to the vast body of Americans. This new approach is more subtle - and more long-range. By allying themselves with "causes" in which the public has a legitimate interest - one way or another - and thereby cloaking themselves in seeming respectability, they can attack democracy, liberalism, our public school system and way of life by indirection. For these are their ultimate objectives. Liberalism in their lingo becomes "Communism," mutual understanding and the elimination of prejudice become "un-American;" while individual development is decried in favor of an authoritarian "discipline."

If they should have their way, the public school system will become a bare bones, a grim authoritarian structure in which drill in a few subjects, perversions of history, dogmatic religion, stern discipline and no nonsense about such things as intergroup relations will be the order of the day. The kind of children that would emerge from this sort of education needs no elaboration.

There is the added danger that large numbers of Americans will be attracted by their catchwords and surface slogans, who are unaware of the underlying aims of the bigots.

Since our democratic way of life and sturdy liberalism are the only climates in which Jews may feel secure and free, the subversion of these features of democracy must inevitably have its effect on Jews. Nor is there any guarantee that these veteran hate-peddlers, encouraged by success in this initial effort, may not eventually be emboldened to add some form of anti-Semitism, subtle or overt, to their arsenal of weapons.

#### The Answer

It is essential, therefore, that Jews in conjunction with all Americans interested in preserving the American way of life, become alerted to the dangers involved in this new attack on modern education. The public schools are our first line of defense; they must not be hampered in their functions or destroyed by sneak attacks. Honest criticism - yes! Sincere debate as to means - of course! But not an attack on the fundamentals of democracy on which they are based.

\*\*\*\* BENJAMIN FREEDMAN-McGINLEY SPLIT \*\*\*\*

\*\*\* NEW FREEDMAN PUBLICATION \*\*\*

A rift between Benjamin Freedman, self-styled "excommunicated Jew", and Conde McGinley, Jr., publisher of the hate-sheet, Common Sense, has developed in the wake of Anna Rosenberg's vindication by the Senate Armed Services Committee on charges of Communist front involvement. Freedman, after separate consultations with Gerald L. K. Smith and Rep. John Rankin, was one of the principal initiators of the Senatorial inquiry.

Prime point of friction between the two former friends appears to be Freedman's insistence on publicly placing responsibility for the debacle of the anti-Rosenberg onslaught upon radio commentator Fulton Lewis, Jr., with McGinley vigorously opposed to such a course on the ground (according to Freedman) that it "would split the Nationalists."

McGinley's Common Sense during the latter part of November heralded the drive against Mrs. Rosenberg's Senate confirmation as Assistant Armed Forces Secretary by mobilizing the bigot element with an issue bearing derogatory scareheads and giving her a vicious anti-semitic, Communist-smear treatment. Thousands of copies of this issue were distributed among Government officials and employees at Washington, and to people throughout the country.

According to Freedman, McGinley suppressed an issue of Common Sense, readied for publication after Christmas. This issue contained Freedman's charges that the general campaign against Mrs. Rosenberg went haywire because of the broadcast disclosure by Fulton Lewis, Jr., on December 6th, that the latter's assistant, and Senator McCarthy's investigator had obtained an affidavit by Ralph DeSola, the witness who accused and "identified" Mrs. Rosenberg as the "Anna Rosenberg" who was a member of the John Reed Club, Communist-front of the '30s.\* His testimony, however, was later thoroughly discredited. According to Freedman, this revelation, made during closed hearings of the Senate Committee, activated Jewish groups to "rescue" her.

Prevented from exploiting this theme in his customary vehicle, Common Sense, Freedman has started his own publication, know the truth (sic), containing substantially all of the suppressed matter. In addition, the new Freedman periodical reveals a rather intimate connection between him and one of the nation's leading anti-semitic propagandists. According to know the truth:

\* On December 19th, it was reported that the FBI had located an "Anna Rosenberg" (other than the Assistant Secretary of Defense) who had been a member of the front-group.

"...Since 1948, Freedman has given unsparingly of his time and his efforts to increase the circulation of COMMON SENSE and has advanced a small fortune for that purpose. Within the past two months alone, Freedman has advanced to and/or for COMMON SENSE in excess of Seven Thousand Dollars (\$7,000.00)....Freedman advanced funds to McGinley to cover the cost of printing, and mailing fifty thousand (50,000) copies of COMMON SENSE (No. 126) /The so-called Anna Rosenberg issue/."

Among the harrowing details relating to the split between patron and publicist, the following is recited by know the truth:

"Freedman spent the entire days of December 18, 19, 20 and 21, 1950 in the printing establishment which prints COMMON SENSE, whipping that issue of COMMON SENSE (No. 128) /The suppressed issue/ into shape to run off on the presses on December 22, 1950. On December 21, 1950 Freedman gave his personal check to the printing establishment as an advance payment for fifty thousand (50,000) copies of COMMON SENSE (No. 128)..."

The balance of the issue contains an extended "explanation" of Freedman's activities before the Senate Armed Forces Committee and elsewhere, including his version of his relationship with the accusing witness DeSola. Much explanation follows as to how it came to pass that Freedman gave copies of DeSola's affidavit to the representatives of Senator McCarthy and Fulton Lewis, Jr. who called on him. A letter containing anti-semitic observations and uncomplimentary references to Lewis is reprinted - signed by Gerald L. K. Smith.

Common Sense, so ably supported and subsidized by wealthy, retired industrialist Freedman, was started by Conde McGinley, Jr. at Union, New Jersey in 1946 under the title Think Weekly, assuming its present name the following year. McGinley, fanatically anti-semitic, made scant headway with the hate-sheet until 1948, when the Freedman money first began pouring in to finance two pro-Arab, anti-Zionist issues (Oct. 3, 31, 1948) circulated in the hundreds of thousands to general lists by commercial mailing agencies. Common Sense, which Freedman publicly declared to be a patriotic, anti-Communist publication, has served as the official organ of the Nationalist Action League of Philadelphia, a crackpot group headed by W. Henry McFarland, Jr., after the NAL was listed as fascist and subversive by the U.S. Attorney General early in 1948. According to the last issue of NAL's

publication (June, 1949) plans were under way to merge NAL with Conde McGinley's own organization, the Loyal American Group. The plan did not materialize. Representative issues of Common Sense are:

July 11, 1948 - containing a defense of Robert H. Best, American broadcaster for the Nazis during the war, convicted for treason.  
April 1, 1949 - a so-called German edition, pleading for tender treatment of the Fatherland, bearing the heading "Deutschland Ausgabe" and the notation in German that it would appear at the same time in South America and South Africa.  
June 1, 1950 - charging Jews with having started the war in Korea.  
September 15, 1950 - containing a reprint of a pamphlet by George W. Armstrong, hate-monger of Ft. Worth and Natchez.  
October 15, 1950 - a twelve-page opus, compiling and restating in topical form virtually every anti-semitic canard extant, including Freedman's pet theory that present day Jews are really descendants of the Khazarim, a Mongolian tribe of southern Russia, which converted to Judaism in the 10th century.

Common Sense often reprints Merwin K. Hart's newsletter. Its issue of January 25, 1948 contained an article by one of Freedman's lawyers, Hallam M. Richardson, who also numbers among his former clients Joe McWilliams, pre-Pearl Harbor fuehrer of the Christian Mobilizers. Not infrequently, a reprint or letter of General George Van Horne Mosely appears. Mosely was revealed by the Dies Committee in 1939 to have participated in a private meeting of "nationalists" at which Fritz Kuhn was a fellow-participant. He now serves as a manager of George W. Armstrong's hate-pamphleteering enterprise.

Freedman, of Hungarian Jewish extraction, once testified that he was debarred from becoming a Catholic communicant because of alleged Jewish influence with the Hierarchy of that Church. An ardent pro-Arab, he is on cordial epistolary terms with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and has associated extensively with official and non-official Arab elements in this country. He claims to have collaborated with Arab League officials in the preparation and presentation of an official memorandum of the Arab League to the State Department in 1946. In a court proceeding he asserted that he had spent \$100,000. for pro-Arab ads in American dailies.

Conde McGinley's latest issue, appearing at the same time as the new Freedman publication, rehashes the assorted diatribes and smears against Mrs. Rosenberg and sidesteps the McGinley-Freedman split.